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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 08/20/09

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Articles:

U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS

1) U.S. Ambassador to Japan Roos arrives to take up post

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
August 20, 2009

Yoichi Kato, editorial staff

The new U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos, 54, arrived to assume his post on August 19. Roos is a lawyer who has no diplomatic experience, but he has been a long-time supporter of President Barack Obama, and his close relationship with the President was the main factor in his appointment to take charge of diplomacy with Japan.

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Roos read out a statement to the media after arriving at Narita Airport. Referring to the 50th anniversary of the signing of the current Japan-U.S. security treaty next year, he emphasized that, "Together, we will strengthen the alliance relationship, so that 50 years from now, we will have even stronger political ties and enjoy even richer cultural exchanges." Roos came accompanied by his wife, eldest daughter, 22, and eldest son, 17. He said: "We look forward to making Japan our second home."

Ahead of Ambassador Roos's arrival in Japan, Professor Emeritus Daniel Okimoto of Stanford University, who is very close to Roos and advises him on Japan policy, gave an interview to Asahi Shimbun in which he advocated a new type of Japan-U.S. alliance under the Obama administration. He said that the two countries should lead the "formulation of a broader concept of security," which also includes such issues as "poverty" and "environmental destruction" that threaten the stability of the world.

2) New U.S. Ambassador to Japan Roos arrives in Japan; Calls for enhanced security and economic ties

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Full)
August 20, 2009

Yoji Hanaoka

New U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos, 54, arrived at Narita Airport on an American commercial airplane yesterday afternoon. "The United States and Japan have forged one of the most successful alliances in history. Together, we will strengthen and expand that alliance," the new U.S. Ambassador said, reading out a statement to the press corps at the airport. He underscored the need to cooperate in addressing security and economic issues on a global scale.

As challenges that must be addressed by the two nations, Roos cited the following areas: strengthening the global economy and promoting trade between the two countries; strengthening global security and expanding democratic values; climate change; pandemic diseases; and energy security.

Touching on his experience working as a lawyer in Silicon Valley in California where there are many high-tech companies, he also said: "(In Silicon Valley), nothing is impossible to accomplish. Japan

embodies that same bold spirit. Together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish."

Clad in a jacket with no necktie, Ambassador Roos made his appearance in a room at the airport together with his wife, Susie, daughter Lauren, 22, and son, David, 17. There he read out the statement and did not take any questions from the press.

3) New U.S. Ambassador Roos: "I am honored to serve as U.S. ambassador to Japan"

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2009

New U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos, 54, arrived at Narita Airport yesterday afternoon and read out a statement at the airport in which he said: "I am honored to be the U.S. ambassador to the great nation of Japan." He then expressed his hopes, saying: "I

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would like to promote the mutual goals and interests of (Japan and the United States)." Positioning the Japan-U.S. relationship as the most successful alliance in history, Roos said: "We will strengthen and expand that alliance." He also stated that the two economic superpowers "will help strengthen the global economy and find new ways to foster trade and investment."

The new U.S. ambassador arrived in Japan along with his wife, daughter, and son.

4) New U.S. Ambassador to Japan Roos arrives in Japan: "If the United States and Japan cooperate, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished"

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2009

John Roos, the new U.S. Ambassador to Japan, arrived yesterday along with his wife, Susie, and other family members. He will begin his diplomatic activities after presenting his credentials to the Emperor today. At Narita Airport Ambassador Roos read a statement that said, in part: "Together (the United States and Japan) will help strengthen the global economy and find new ways to foster bilateral trade and investment." He demonstrated a willingness to cooperate closely to resolve the global economic crisis.

"In Silicon Valley, nothing is impossible to accomplish," said Ambassador Ross, who was a lawyer in Silicon Valley. "If the United States and Japan cooperate, there is nothing we cannot accomplish."

ELECTION POLLS

5) DPJ likely to gain 300 seats

ASAHI (Top play) (Abridged)
August 20, 2009

Ahead of the Aug. 30 general election, the Asahi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based survey of voters in 150 of the nation's 300 single-seat constituencies on Aug. 18-19 to examine the election campaign in its initial phase. As a result, the survey found that the Democratic Party of Japan is likely to gain a total of more than 300 seats, way above a majority (241 seats). The Liberal Democratic Party is likely to be unable to reach half of its pre-election holding (300 seats) and could possibly come in way below it. Meanwhile, in the nation's proportional representation blocs, the New Komeito and the Japanese Communist Party will likely level off, and the Social Democratic Party is facing an uphill battle.

When the survey was conducted, 40% of the polled voters in the single-seat constituencies slightly under 30% in the proportional representation blocs did not clarify their voting behavior. In addition, 25% said they might vote for a different political party or candidate depending on developments in the election campaign. Given such circumstances, the situation could see a substantial change during the final stages.

The 150 single-seat constituencies surveyed this time were chosen to be characteristic of the nation's electorate, and its results were doubled to see the nationwide situation.

In the case of the DPJ, many of its candidates, who were seated in
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the House of Representatives before its dissolution this time or lost their one-time seats in past elections, are now doing well in their campaign battles. In addition, the party's new faces are leading other candidates running from the Liberal Democratic Party and other political parties. The DPJ could garner more than 200 seats in the nation's single-seat constituencies and could further gain many more. In the case of proportional representation as well, the DPJ will likely garner more seats in all 11 blocs. In the last general election that was held in 2005, the DPJ won a total of 61 seats for proportional representation. This time around, the DPJ's potential outcome could be way above that number and will likely reach a total of substantially more than 80 seats.

In the case of the LDP, even former cabinet ministers running in single-seat constituencies are facing difficulties. The LDP's total outcome in the nation's single-seat constituencies is highly likely to be way below 100 seats. In the nation's proportional representation blocs as well, the LDP could drop from its pre-election holding of 77 seats and there is no knowing if the LDP will be able to reach 60 seats.

6) LDP, DPJ in clear-cut showdown

MAINICHI (Top play) (Abridged)
August 20, 2009

In the run-up to the Aug. 30 general election for the House of Representatives, the Mainichi Shimbun conducted a survey of 1,374 candidates on policy issues. The Liberal Democratic Party, which has run the government for years, is now being challenged by the Democratic Party of Japan. As seen from this showdown between the LDP and the DPJ, their candidates are clearly maintaining their parties' positions that differ from each other in many respects. The survey was started after the House of Representatives was dissolved on July 21. Answers were received from a total of 1,347 candidates by Aug. 18 when the election was announced. The retrieval rate was 98%.

The LDP and the DPJ differed clearly on the Constitution and foreign relations in particular. The two parties also differed on how to handle the nation's pension system and the consumption tax, which have now become issues in their election campaigns.

In the survey, respondents were asked if they would support the idea of raising the consumption tax during their four-year term of office after elected. To this question, 49% of respondents from the LDP answered "yes," with 95% of those from the DPJ saying "no."

Meanwhile, constitutional reform has yet to become a major issue. In the survey, however, 82% of LDP respondents were affirmative, with 66% of DPJ respondents remaining negative. In the area of foreign relations as well, 63% of those from the LDP answered that Japan should give top priority to its relations with the United States, while 62% of those from the DPJ said Japan should prioritize Asia more than ever.

Respondents were also asked if they thought Japan should send the Self-Defense Forces to Afghanistan in order to help that country. To this question, 58% of LDP respondents said "yes," and 68% of DPJ respondents said "no."

ELECTION ONLY 10 DAYS AWAY

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7) Industrial associations fast distancing themselves from LDP; only

26 prefectural medical associations support the party

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2009

A growing number of prefectural industrial associations, traditional supporters of the Liberal Democratic Party, are distancing themselves from the LDP. The Ibaraki Prefectural Medical Association decided last fall to support candidates on the Democratic Party of Japan's ticket for all the prefecture's single-seat districts. Medical associations in eleven other prefectures, including Saitama and Kyoto, have decided to back the DPJ and other opposition parties in some district races. Eight prefectural construction associations have decided not to make recommendations but to let members cast their votes as they please (in the upcoming House of Representatives election on Aug. 30). While the possibility of a change of government is moving closer to reality, industrial organizations that have backed away from support for the LDP have called for a reversal of structural reform and spending-cut policies.

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun conducted a telephone survey of the political organizations of prefectural medical, construction, and agriculture associations regarding their endorsements.

Although the Japan Medical Association decided to support the ruling parties, mainly the LDP, only 26 prefectural medical associations will give full support to the LDP (some support the New Komeito).

Only the Ibaraki Medical Association has decided to support the DPJ in all single-seat districts in the prefecture. Noteworthy is that many prefectural medical associations will support the DPJ in some districts or support both the LDP and DPJ. Compared with the 2005 Lower House election, the number of prefectural medical associations supporting the LDP in the upcoming election has decreased by 12. The Kyoto Medical Association has decided to support Seiji Maehara of the DPJ in the prefecture's No. 2 district. The Shiga Medical Association will support both the LDP and DPJ candidates in the No. 4 district.

Among the 47 prefectural political federations of construction (companies) (kensetsu sei-ji renmei), 34 have announced support for the LDP. The Ibaraki federation has endorsed Yoshimi Watanabe, leader of Your Party, in the No. 3 district. Although the Okinawa federation has decided to allow its members to vote their consciences, many members are opposed to the DPJ's policy of cutting public works projects. However, several federations have complained that structural reform has sapped the vitality of local construction industries.

Thirty-two political federations of farmers (nogyosha sei-ji renmei) have decided to support the LDP. Meanwhile, the Aomori federation, which supported the LDP in the previous poll, has decided to let its members vote their consciences in all single-seat districts. The Okayama federation endorsed Takeo Hiranuma, an independent, in the No. 3 district, and the Hiroshima federation backs Shizuka Kamei of the People's New Party (PNP) in the No. 6 district.

8) Aso in Hokkaido, Hatoyama in Tohoku vying for farm vote

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)

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August 20, 2009

Prime Minister Taro Aso and Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama yesterday delivered stump speeches in Hokkaido and Tohoku region, both of which are home to many farmers, respectively.

Aso gave speeches in Obihiro, Sapporo and other cities in Hokkaido, in which he criticized the DPJ's change in wording regarding a proposed Japan-U.S. free trade agreement (FTA) in its policy manifesto. He said: "The policy turnaround shows that the party has not seriously considered agricultural policy."

Directing his criticism at Deputy President Ichiro Ozawa, Aso said

in reference to the Hosokawa cabinet's agreement on the minimum access formula for rice in 1993: "I would like you to remember what Mr. Ozawa and Mr. Hosokawa did." He added: "I would like you to see which political parties have come up with practical policies and have considered the need to fulfill their responsibility. We are confident about these points."

Meanwhile, Hatoyama visited Aomori, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures. In a stump speech in Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture, he cited the party's eye-catching pledge to introduce income indemnity to all farming households and emphasized: "We will compensate for the margin losses between the prices and costs of rice and apples for all farmers. The farmers will be able to find their successors without anxiety."

But Hatoyama stopped short of referring to the FTA pledge. Regarding the issue of the necessary fiscal resources to finance the proposed income-indemnity system, as well, he just said: "The source of revenue will be generated by eliminating wasteful spending of taxpayers' money without fail."

9) Differences in campaign strategies between LDP and DPJ clear; LDP has eye on conservative voters and DPJ on unaffiliated voters

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Excerpts)
August 20, 2009

On August 19, two days into the election campaigning, differences in strategies between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) - both are aiming to take the reins of government - became clear. The LDP underscored the need to return to conservative values, as seen in Prime Minister Taro Aso's criticism of DPJ policies as "socialistic." Meanwhile, DPJ executives, including President Yukio Hatoyama, played up their party's measures to support household finances.

Yesterday Prime Minister Aso delivered a stump speech in the rain in Hokkaido's Obihiro City. Aso said: "The LDP is the true conservative party. We will defend the families, the homeland, and the state of Japan. We will make the economic pie bigger and will redistribute it later."

With respect to the DPJ's manifesto, Aso also labeled its pork-barrel policies - possibly with its childcare allowance system in mind - as socialistic.

Since the election campaign kicked off, Aso has been playing up the LDP's conservative overtones more powerfully than ever before. He

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apparently has a sense of alarm that the party might fail to win votes of traditional LDP supporters in addition to swing voters amid growing chances for a change of administration.

In a pre-election campaign poll conducted by the Tokyo Shimbun, only 45% of LDP supporters said they would vote for the LDP in the proportional representation section. This has prompted the LDP to take measures to prop up support by traditional conservative LDP backers.

The issue of Japanese flags being cut up to create the DPJ's insignia at a meeting in Kagoshima Prefecture has become the new ammunition for the LDP to attack the DPJ.

Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda repeatedly cited this incident in his stump speeches in Kanagawa Prefecture. Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura, too, criticized the DPJ in his speech in Sapporo, saying, "The DPJ has never hoisted the Hinomaru national flag or sung the national anthem at its conventions."

At the same time, such a trend of the LDP to return to conservative voters tells of its need to act on the defensive, which is completely different from the postal election in 2005 in which the LDP's support base expanded to cover unaffiliated voters.

Meanwhile, DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama kicked off his stumping

yesterday in Aomori's Hachinohe City. He delivered speeches at seven places as he traveled southward to Miyagi, Fukushima, Tochigi, and Saitama. Disregarding Aso's "socialistic" criticism, Hatoyama played up policies designed to directly support household finances.

In Sendai, he enthusiastically spoke about a child care allowance system as a means to stem the declining birth rate, a serious issue undermining national interests. He also played up an income-subsidy system for farmers in the five prefectures where agriculture is the primary industry.

Deputy President Naoto Kan, too, gave stump speeches at five places in Hiroshima and Ehime, and Secretary General Katsuya Okada also gave speeches at five places in Kumamoto and Kanagawa.

10) Aso apologizes for Shoichi Nakagawa's drunken behavior, citing poor supervision

SANKEI (Page 5) (Excerpts)
August 20, 2009

Delivering a stump speech yesterday in Obihiro City, Hokkaido, the electoral district of Shoichi Nakagawa, Prime Minister Taro Aso apologized before supporters for Nakagawa's drunken behavior (at a G-7 press conference in Rome in February), for which he resigned as finance minister. He said: "I offer my apologies for his behavior and my poor supervision."

Standing next to Nakagawa with a meek look, Aso further said: "We caused you anxiety over such an unpleasant sight." He mentioned "poor supervision" twice.

But he added: "Human beings make mistakes, but human beings can forgive the mistakes. I want you to give Shoichi Nakagawa the momentum for reinstatement once again." He then bowed deeply.

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NORTH KOREA PROBLEM

11) North Korea was prepared to reinvestigate abductions, but aborted due to PM Fukuda's resignation

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
August 20, 2009

It was learned that based on an agreement at the Japan-DPRK working level talks in August 2008, North Korea had decided to launch a committee to reinvestigate the abduction issue in early September 2008. A specific date had also been fixed through coordination with the Japanese side. However, shortly before the committee was to be launched, then Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda announced his resignation on September 1, which prompted the North Koreans to suspend the plan. There is a view within the Japanese government that if Fukuda had not resigned, the reinvestigation might have started.

According to a government source, after the bilateral talks in Shenyang, China, on August 11-12, 2008, a date for launching the committee was determined through coordination between the two sides. Fukuda had also approved of the plan after receiving a report from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

However, Fukuda announced his resignation right before the committee's launch. The North Koreans then notified the Japanese government of its decision to "postpone the start of the reinvestigation until we can determine how the new administration will handle the matters agreed upon at the working level talks." The above government source noted that "the investigation committee was just about to be launched." It is believed that the DPRK had had great expectations of the Fukuda administration, which had shown enthusiasm about normalizing bilateral relations.

Since the start of the Aso administration, the government has asked North Korea repeatedly to launch a reinvestigation, telling it that "the policy on implementing the agreement remains unchanged." While the DPRK has not negated the previous agreement, it has not made any

specific response.

The dominant view in the Japanese government right now is that "North Korea will not take any action at least until the DPRK policy toward the new administration formed after the general election becomes clear." Since North Korean issues are expected to proceed with the U.S. and the DPRK as the main players from now on, strengthening cooperation with the U.S. for a solution to the abduction issue will also be an issue for the new administration.

12) North Korea demanded direct talks with U.S. during ex-President Clinton's visit

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2009

Yoshiki Ozaki

It was learned on August 19 that during former President Bill Clinton's visit to North Korea early this month, the North Koreans voiced harsh criticism of the conduct of the Six-Party Talks on its nuclear issue and proposed a new and "different mode of dialogue." The DPRK declared its permanent withdrawal from the Six-Party Talks earlier, and it is believed that it demanded direct U.S.-DPRK talks

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from President Barack Obama through Clinton. It was also learned that the U.S. government has informed the concerned countries of its analysis of General Secretary Kim Jong Il's health condition that "he has recovered considerably." The above was revealed by a number of Six-Party Talks sources who received briefings from the U.S. government.

When Clinton and his party arrived in Pyongyang on August 4, he was met by Yang Hyong Sop, vice president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), and other senior officials. This was followed by a meeting with SPA Presidium President Kim Yong Nam, who has the rank of a head of state.

During this meeting, Kim strongly denounced the Six-Party Talks, which have been suspended since last December. He said that the Talks "were a forum for criticizing North Korea, so we declared our non-participation." He reportedly added that, "There are other modes of dialogue," demanding direct talks between the U.S. and the DPRK.

Clinton replied that the purpose of his trip was to retrieve the two female American reporters. He limited himself to urging North Korea to return to the six-way talks and brought North Korea's message home. In his subsequent meeting with General Secretary Kim, Clinton reportedly merely conveyed the U.S. government's standing policy on seeking the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile, based on information obtained during Clinton's visit, the U.S. government also analyzed the health condition of General Secretary Kim, who suffered a stroke in the summer of 2008, and has passed on its analysis to the concerned countries.

Kim reportedly "looked healthy and spoke coherently," making an astounding recovery from his illness.

Former presidential assistant John Podesta, who accompanied Clinton on the trip, told Reuters and other media outlets on August 14 that "General Secretary Kim was fully engaged" and that "(the visit) was quite an amazing experience." A source on U.S.-DPRK relations confides that "the greatest surprise for the concerned countries is General Secretary Kim's health."

The Japanese government had expected the DPRK to demand direct talks with the U.S. The government also reckons that "a solution to the nuclear, missile, and abduction issues will have to be through a decision by General Secretary Kim." It looks at the recent visits by U.S., South Korean, and Chinese officials to North Korea calmly. A government source says: "The fact that North Korea is emphasizing 'dialogue' shows that the sanctions have been effective."

Dialogue is premised on return to Six-Party Talks: Secretary of

State Clinton

Takashi Arimoto, Washington

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton commented on August 18 on the possibility of negotiating with North Korea. She said: "Our policy remains the same. We continue to offer to the North Koreans the opportunity to have a dialogue within the Six-Party Talks framework," reiterating that dialogue is premised on a return to the Six-Party Talks. She added that: "This will be of great benefit to the North Korean people. The choice is up to the North Koreans (whether they want to return to the talks)," stressing that U.S.

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policy will not change.

13) Government to establish "Japan fund" worth one billion yen to support activities to conserve biological diversity in developing countries

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2009

The Japanese government has decided to set up a "biodiversity Japan fund" (tentative name) to offer financial assistance for activities to protect wildlife in developing countries. The government will host for the first time the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) in Nagoya in October 2010. The planned fund will be worth about 1 billion yen, almost the same amount as the annual budget (about 1.1 billion yen) for the secretariat of the conference. The government aims to underscore its eagerness to address the task of securing biodiversity on its own initiative.

The Environment Ministry will include 1 billion yen in its request for fiscal 2010 to create the fund, which will be set up at the conference's secretariat in Montreal, Canada.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, about 16,000 species of wildlife are on the verge of extinction. The United Nations estimates that activities by human beings, such as nature development and greenhouse gas emissions, have accelerated the pace of wildlife's extinction. On the agenda at COP10 will be the final assessment of the "2010 target" set in a meeting of the treaty powers held seven years ago to significantly reduce the pace of loss of biological diversity and a new goal beyond 2010.

The Environment Ministry is concerned that some developing countries might not be able to participate in the joint effort due to financial difficulties. Given this, the government judged it necessary to prepare a new framework for all treaty powers, including developing countries, to take part in the effort and definitely achieve the target.

ZUMWALT